

# Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

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## SOME GOOD THINGS

It is not money nor influence, but spiritual life, we need. That only will bring all good things in its train.

We cull this from an exchange, and as a foundation stone for a spiritual philosophy and a spiritual prosperity, it is to be heartily approved. There is a constant and powerful tendency in human nature to set money and influence upon a pedestal, and that tendency crops out in the church. The wealthy and respectable member is often treated with an exclusive respect more on account of what he has than what he is. The materialism of this age threatens the church with far greater perils than the persecutions of the past age, and we need a distinct return to apostolic spirituality.

So many churches depend upon spasmodic revivals, and then are unable to assimilate the fruits because of the unthawed state of the membership; so many members never take any part in evangelistic work, and never attend any of the means of grace except on Sabbath morning; so many never attend even then except at rare intervals; so many faithfully attend the lodge that never attend the prayer meeting, that the tabulated statistics of the church are often no more reliable than would be those of an army if the inmates of the hospitals, those who have been taken prisoners by the enemy, and the deserters were given as a part of the fighting force.

This is rather a sad picture. Think of a church with icicles all the time hanging on the edges. You don't have to think of it, you can see it. It is religion in cold storage, spirituality on ice. Think of church members more attentive to the lodge than to the service of God. We should be sorry to think that any of our churches or church members answered to the above description.

The religious and moral condition of many official members suggests serious problems. Where it has become a standing theme for ridicule that most of the office bearers in the church violate its rules, and never participate actively in its aggressive spiritual work; and where in addition to that it is understood that the pastor finds his chief social life with these inconsistent members, and they are the ruling influence, the situation bodes no good.

If an association calling itself a church cannot provide from among its own constituency better material for officers and pastors, it should take down its sign at once. Now it may happen that a church wherein there are some good people might be afflicted with such officers we would suggest to them that they get together

and by prayer and fasting prevail upon God to save them from the disgrace of it; to convert the officers, give them a fresh baptism of spiritual power, and to remove such as are incapable of renewal. God can find a remedy for the most hopeless situations.

It is the preaching of the truth and the living of it by the minister, and especially the utilization of his friendship, and a true reciprocation of the courtesies that he receives from those who are loving this present evil world, by appeals in private conversation, by which the tone of a religious society is gradually raised.

We have seen, perhaps in the *Ram's Horn*, the picture of a church all piled on top of a wagon, with the preacher in the shafts pulling his soul out of his body trying to get them along and get them up. It doesn't look quite fair to load the poor fellow up in this way, but it may happen to come in the line of his business once in a while. It is a plain proposition, however, that a preacher should live the truth, and he will find this a most powerful seconding of his ministry.

The chief difficulty with the laity as well as the ministry is a lax view of the law of God, and an exaggerated view of the provisions of salvation. Men seem really to believe that connection with the church, and a general consent to the fact that Christ died to save, and that he is an Almighty Saviour, are sufficient for salvation. Whereas the whole Scriptures teach the contrary. A mere religious profession is an abomination in the sight of God, and trust in Christ without an earnest and constant attempt to keep his commandments, insures one the reward of the foolish virgins, and of the man who built his ecclesiastical house upon the sand and not upon the rock.

This time he struck the core of the trouble. Lax morals, lax church life and lax spirituality, has its roots in lax doctrine. This writer who is the editor of a great paper in a great church could not do his people a better service than to take this last paragraph and preach it from Dan to Beersheba. A whole generation of his preachers has been inculcating the doctrine which he deplores, and it will take more than one editorial article to bring them back to the truth. If a Dunkard had told them these things, they would have called it Dunkardism. Well, it is, and we shouldn't neglect to practice it, either.

If spiritual life be sought, it will be attained, and then conscience and gratitude will open the purses of the church.

Yes, that is true, but wanting it comes before seeking it. How many church members really and truly want it?